1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

ma, who when he was in court, sat in front of the throne facing the same way as the Shehu between the two lines. This symbolized his semi-independent status as a holder of a large section of the kingdom rather than a set of fragmented fiefs. Thus the idea of a consolidated set of fief-holdings on the western boundary was maintained. There was a constant threat from the Fulani which made such a move politically expedient.

How much actual power this nineteenth-century court actually had is debatable. Obviously a few favorite advisers who had the ear of the monarch could become very powerful men during the period of their favor. However, who these were seems to have varied throughout the century. Indeed even a place in court might be gained by a very ambitious rural chief, if he appeared often enough and was able to please the monarch by his service and tributes. In the realm of the judiciary some significant changes occurred as well. Before the nineteenth century, as we have already noted, there was a chief judge, the Talba, who was ranked as "the second man" in the state. During the double regency at the beginning of the century, the first Shehu, Laminu, acted as his own chief judge. He was steeped in Koranic learning and is supposed to have had magical powers that enabled him to adjudicate even the most difficult of cases, harshly but with justice. Parenthetically, this power—and not his military acumen and leadership—is considered by the traditions to have been the chief reason why Laminu saved Bornu from the Fulani wars. Later in his rule, sometime in the 1820s, Shehu Laminu appointed two leading religious personages who came from the families of the leading Bornu religious practitioners to the new offices of Liman and Imam. The former took over the major duties of chief legal adviser to the Shehu, while the Imam became the chief religious practitioner in the state. The old Talba stayed with the court of the former dynasty, and after its demise the title became a lesser one in the judicial hierarchy which is where it stands today.

Punishments for misdemeanors were relatively harsh by contempory standards. Adultery on a Muslim holy day could bring 400 lashes to a man or 200 to a woman. It was believed that judges in the capital of Kuka actually set spies upon the populace in search of law breakers. Intentional murder was punishable by death, and the relatives of the dead man carried out the execution by stoning the murderer. Thieves who were repeatedly caught finally had a hand cut off or were tortured by being buried up to the neck, then having their heads buttered or honeyed and exposed above the ground to attract insects. Unpaid debts proven in court resulted in the confiscation of all the debtor's movable property and a fine to the court. The debtor was pinned to the ground by court officials until he consented to confiscation. However, if he obviously had no means at all, the judge dismissed the case with the words, "God send you the means."

All titled officials and even untitled followers of the Shehu could be given or they could inherit, at the pleasure of the Shehu, rights of revenue collection and administration in one or more settlements spread throughout the entire state. These fiefs were granted by the Shehu, nominal owner of all the land in the state. Generally speaking such rights were hereditary in the male line, but the Shehu could diminish or expand the holding of one fief-holder at the expense of another, and a new monarch was expected to patronize his own favorites. Any person holding a fief directly from the monarch was called a chima kura or "the big lord." There

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were two types of differently named fiefs, the one where membership was territorially based, and the other where membership was ethnic or clan based, that is, based on birth into a particular group regardless of its territoriality. The big lord remained in the capital and administered his various fiefs, sometimes ranging up to twenty or more through his representative, the chima gana, or "the junior lords." Each junior lord lived in one of the fiefs of his superior, the fief-holder, or big lord. This junior lord was the highest authority living in the fief and from him one could appeal to the Shehu, being presented by representatives of the junior lord to the big lord living in the capital, and through this latter person to the court of the monarch.

This central administration was linked up to a local one. There was a village head, or bullama, who usually belonged to the male line of the founder of the settlement. However, he was only one among a group of eligibles. If the local junior lord did not like him or the tributes he delivered, then the junior lord could appoint another member of the same line. There are also some records of junior lords shifting the headship to other lineages as well as to persons within the same lineage. As settlements grew in size, sons, clients, and even slaves of the original village head would hive off and form small settlements or satellite communities nearby under the general jurisdiction of the original village head and the local leadership of the founder of the satellite community. These new heads were called mbarma (hamlet heads) as were heads of sub-sections of the original village that had some sort of unity based on occupation or kinship or a combination of both. Thus a big lord with the help of his junior lords could have his fief-holdings expand in size, and he tried to help this process along by not being too excessive in his demands on the peasants, and by protecting them [redacted]iders and other forms of outside depredation. A big lord's wealth and abili[redacted]upply militia to the monarch depended upon his success as a fief-holder, so th[redacted]t was in his best interests to see to it that each fief was well governed. People could complain to other nobles, or emigrate out of the fief, and such indications of mismanagement, if they continued, could lead to the granting of fief rights to someone else. This new big lord could then take over part of the original holding, or in extreme cases the entire fief was transferred to another big lord's administration.

A very successful village head—one with a large and flourishing settlement containing many satellite communities—could be rewarded for his increase in power and authority by being brought to the Shehu's court in the capital and given the title of lawan. The Shehu then performed a ceremony in which a turban was placed on the new lawan's head. This meant he was now a member, albeit a local one, of the titled nobility of the state. In this case, he not only paid accession-to-office-gifts to the junior and senior lord which all local headsmen did, but to the Shehu as well. Once having been advanced from bullama to lawan, it was now possible for some of the leading heads of satellite villages to be made into bullama (by the junior lord and the lawan) with their own mbarma or leaders of satellite communties under them in turn. If these inter-related communities developed even further, the lawan might be brought into the capital again and be made officially into an ajia by the Shehu, giving bullama and mbarma under him the opportunity of becoming lawan with bullama and mbarma in turn under them, all under final authority of the ajia and the most senior of the junior lords. By this time the big